

PART I

POPULATION AND ECONOMIC STUDY

THE POPULATION

TRENDS -- 1883 to 1960

Written history of Catawba County dates to at least 1747, but the Town of Maiden was not officially formed until its incorporation in 1883.* The railroad had reached this area in 1882.

The settlement got its start as early as 1804 when a Swiss settler started a mining operation and foundry in the area. (It is reported to have produced cannon for the War of 1812 and later for the Confederacy.) Cotton mills (two) followed this initial industry, and woodworking plants were established by 1892. Industry has continued to flourish here, providing such well-known operations as Carolina Mills, Inc. (textiles); Rex Knitting (textiles); Baumritter Corp -- until recently known as Superior Chair (furniture); Maiden Knitting and Finishing (textiles); Newton Glove, Inc., (work and safety gloves); and American and Efird Mills, Inc., (industrial thread).

The Maiden of 1883 had a population of three families. This small beginning rapidly changed to 664 persons by 1910, and 1,266 persons by 1920. In spite of this early growth, the Maiden population has not grown as rapidly as the remainder of Catawba County or North Carolina as a whole in later years. Table 1 shows this "slow-down" in growth for Maiden. The 1950 to 1960 change, for example, was comparable to neighboring

*Source: A New Geography of North Carolina, Vol., III; Bill Sharpe, Sharpe Publishing Co., Raleigh, N.C., 1961